

Patent Claims:

1. A method for processing mailpieces comprising:
 - (a) detecting information present on at least one surface of a mailpiece and applying a machine-readable identification code onto the mailpieces;
 - (b) transmitting the detected information and the identification code to an interface computer;
 - (c) storing the detected information and the pertinent identification code as data;
 - (d) accessing the stored data;
 - (e) determining address information on the basis of the detected and stored information;
 - (f) comparing the detected address information with address information present in a database;
 - (g) associating the detected address information with new address information on the basis of the comparison that has been carried out;
 - (h) transmitting the associated new address information and the identification code to the interface computer;
 - (i) detecting the identification code applied onto the mailpieces; and,
 - (j) applying the new address information onto the mailpiece, whereby the new address information is applied as a function of the identification code.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing the mailpieces according to a two-stage process, comprising preliminarily sorting the mailpieces in a first sorting step and, separately, sorting the mailpieces into smaller units in a second sorting step, and detecting the information present on the surface of the mailpiece and converting the address information present on the mailpiece into the new address information during the first sorting step.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising ascertaining whether the detected address information contains a first postal code, and converting the first postal code into a postal code that matches correct address information.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising applying the new address information onto the mailpiece in coded form.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the address information comprises a barcode.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein the address information at least partially in plain text.
7. The method of claim 2, further comprising carrying out at least one sorting step as a function of the new address information.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising transporting the mailpieces at least over a segment as a function of the new address information.

9. A device for processing mailpieces comprising:
 - a) a detection device capable of detecting information present on at least one surface of the mailpieces and a printer to apply a machine-readable identification code onto the mailpieces;
 - b) an interface computer comprising memory for storing the detected information;
 - c) processing stations comprising a processor capable of accessing the stored detected information and the appertaining stored identification codes, and capable of determining address information on the basis of the stored detected information;
 - d) a database comprising address information and a comparison unit adapted to compare the detected address information with address information present in the database,
 - e) a processor programmed to associate the detected address information with new address information on the basis of a comparison of the detected address information with the address information that is present in the database;
 - f) a transmitter capable of transmitting the new address information and the identification code from the processing stations to the interface computer; and,
 - g) a device capable of detecting the identification code applied onto the mailpieces and capable of applying the new address information onto the mailpiece as a function of the identification code.